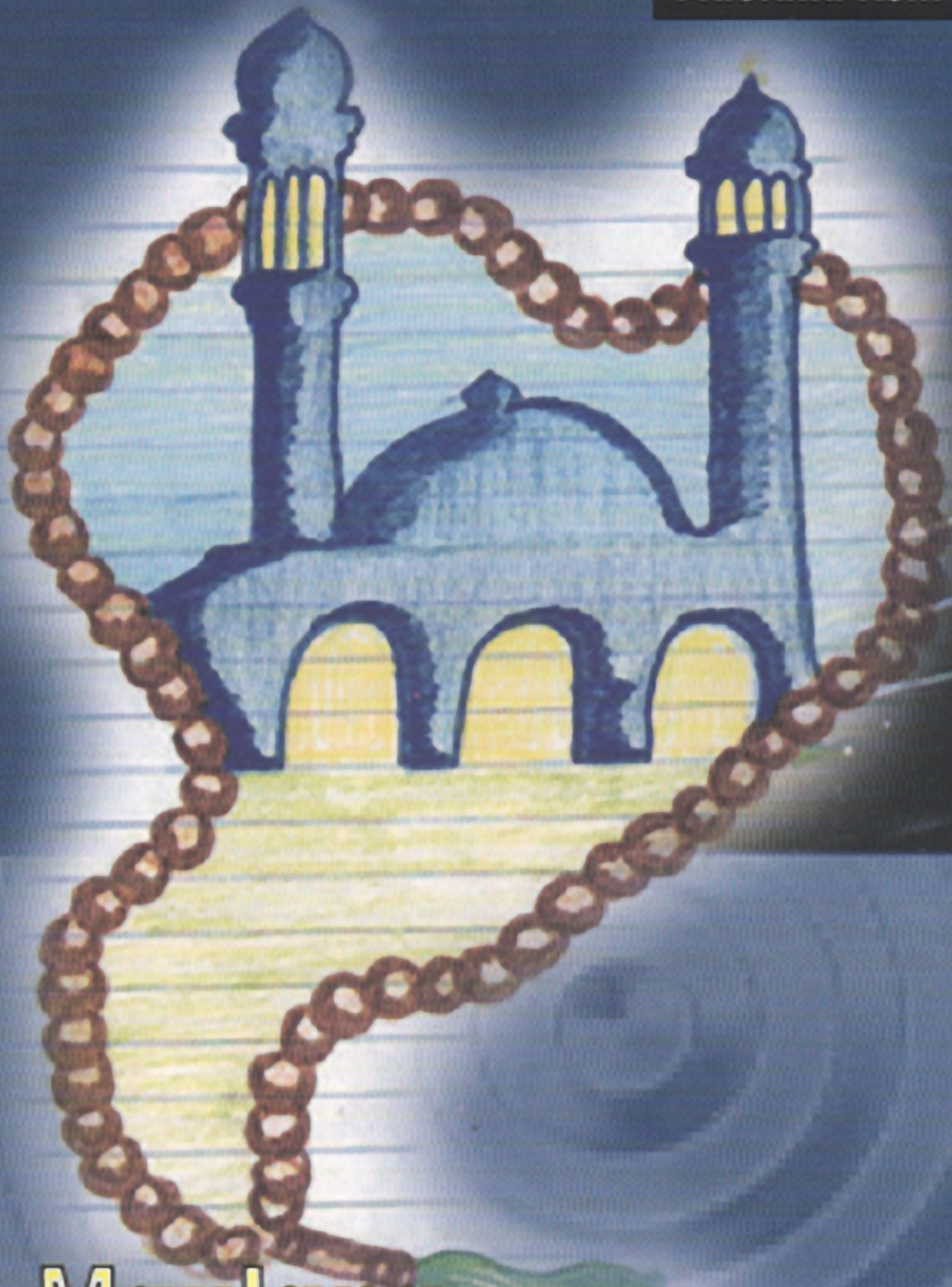


Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi



Maulana
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Stories of
Saints

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1. An Episode to reflect

Hadhrat Hakimul Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (rahmatullah alayh), narrates the following awe-inspiring episode in which there is a great lesson for reflection. A man who was a resident of the town of Gawaaliya, India, spared no efforts in the English education of his son. (In those days of political serfdom) it was considered a honour to be educated along the lines of the British rulers). He expended a considerable sum of money in his son's worldly education.

After attaining the limits of English education which the institutions in India could offer, the Father despatched his son to London to obtain the highest qualifications in English education. The son passed his examinations in London with flying colours, but upon returning to India he became seriously ill.

His condition deteriorated until he (the son) was on the verge of death. The father, stricken with sorrow and misery, sat at the bedside of his dying son and wailed:

“O my son! I have spent 25 thousand rupees in your education, but I have nor seen the fruit of my efforts.”

The son in the last stages of life suddenly opened his eyes and exclaimed:

“O my beloved father! Why do you wail and cry now? When you observe me in the Aakhirah burning in the Fire of Jahannum then you may truly cry. You, by spending these 25 thousand rupees have made the arrangements for my fall into Jahannum.

You have purchased Jahannum for me with this sum. Because you have kept me ignorant of the education of the Deen. At this time I am witnessing the futility of all my education. The Angels of death are at hand. You, by expending such a large sum, have not befriended me, but you have displayed that you are my enemy manifest.” (Wa’zul Huda)

2.Forgiveness over Removing a Thorn From the Road

Friends! What a wonderful Court is that [the Court of Allah]. There, pardon is decreed over slight acts. It is documented in the Hadeeth that a certain person will have no good deeds with him besides that he removed a thorn from the road one day. Apparently, this is a slight and insignificant act. But this was appreciated by Allah Ta'ala and he was pardoned on account of this.

Friends! Do not treat lightly any act of good no matter how small it may be. Sometimes a “small” act is accepted, whilst grand acts which pleased one will be rejected.

3.The Night of the Milk

There is an incident of a Buzrug [a saintly person]. When he passed away then another Buzrug received kashf [manifestation from Allah Ta'ala] or he saw in a dream that the deceased Buzrug was being questioned. "What amal [deed] have you brought for Us?"

He replied: "Err, nothing, besides Tauheed. [Tauheed is the Belief of Allah Ta'ala being unique in His Being and attributes and particularly, that He is the Cause of all events.]

"You are a liar," the response came. "Your Tauheed was also flawed. Remember the night of the milk?"

What happened on the "night of the milk" was that one night after drinking milk the Buzrug's stomach started to pain. "The milk has given me a tummy-ache", he disclosed to someone. He was thus interrogated: "You declared the milk to be the cause, whereas We made it happen! What kind of Tauheed is this?"

When his Tauheed was also debunked, the Buzrug was on tenterhooks.

Then it was proclaimed: "You have prejudiced your own case. You confess to having only one good deed; and that has been refuted. You are thus deserving of Jahannam.

"But, listen! We are forgiving you, and over what? One night you saw a kitten shivering in the cold. You took pity over it and covered it with a blanket. The

kitten prayed for you. We accepted the du'aa of that kitten and your forgiveness is on account of that du'aa".

4. Good Deeds, the Selfless and the Momentous Day of the Aakhirat

Friends! In the Aakhirat nothing will avail one besides righteous deeds (A'maal-e-Saalihah). And don't feel snug at one's parents being pious. "They will share some of their good deeds with me." There [in the Aakhirat] no one will be able to help another [without the permission of Allah].

An incident is mentioned in the Hadeeth Shareef of a person. On the Day of Qiyaamah one person's good and bad deeds will be equal. The law there is that if one's good deeds are more, then one will be a Jannati, and if one's bad deeds are more, then one will be a Jahannami. And if both are equal then one will be left in A'raaf [a station between Paradise and Hellfire].

According to this law the man will be told: "Bring a good deed from somewhere and you will be dispatched to Jannat."

The man will be beaming with joy, thinking: "I have my parents, my wife, my offspring and many friends and acquaintances. There should be no problem in getting a good deed from one of them."

He will thus go and request from his dad a good deed. "I am in need of one act of good. You are my father. Take pity on me. Please give me one deed."

The father will refuse point-blank. "My life is at stake here. How can I risk giving you a good deed," the father will answer.

Mom will answer the same. Offspring will refuse bluntly. Friends and acquaintances will become abusive. In sheer despondency he will take the long walk back.

On the way he will meet a person who will have just a single good deed to his credit. This person [with just a single recorded good deed] will enquire: “Brother! What’s the matter? Why are you looking so distressed?”

“If there was a solution to my predicament I would have related it to you. But no one can avail me today,” he replied. “Everyone is gripped with fear for themselves. There is no benefit in relating my case to you. My parents, kids, relatives, friends and associates have all turned me down. What can you do?”

The stranger will respond: “Just tell me what is the matter. Who knows, perhaps I may be of some help.”

In short, after a lengthy deliberation he will reveal his predicament. “I badly need just one good deed,” he will say.

The stranger will reply: “I have one good deed only. It will not help me in any way due to the overwhelming number of my evil deeds. I am destined for Jahannam. This good deed of mine is akin to none. Take it for yourself. It will help you.”

Confused, the one in search of a good deed will exclaim: “Yaa Allah! Who is the big-hearted person who is parting with his good deed without consideration?”

Friends! There [in the Aakhirat] these spirited souls will stand out and extend their hands of munificence. They will be the ones who will take pity on others. Your father and your mother won't help you. [In other words, help there will not be on account of parenthood, family-ties or friendship. Those who will come to the rescue of the distraught on that momentous day will be the selfless.]

In short, this person will return with the good deed beaming with joy and present it in the Divine-Court. According to the Law there, he will be forgiven, in view of his good deeds being greater.

Then the spirited stranger will be summoned and questioned: "What have you done? Why have you parted with your good deed? Do you have no concern for your salvation?"

He will humbly respond: "O Allah! I had just one good deed. I am aware that the law here dictates that I am a Jahannami. Thus, the good deed is of no benefit to me. Yes, if You forgive me out of Your Grace, then that is something else. But, in view of my forgiveness depending on Your Grace, not on my solitary good deed, then I saw no reason in breaking the heart of that poor person. I gifted my good deed to my fellow Muslim brother for him to attain forgiveness. My case, I left to the Mercy of Allah."

His selflessness will earn him, too, forgiveness.

5. Those White Hairs are an Insurance

Sometimes Allah Ta'ala forgives on mere outer looks regardless of the practical aspect [that is, regardless of a person's deeds]. In this regard there was a Buzrug [saintly person] by the name of Qadhi Yahya Bin Aktham who was an ustad of Imam Bukhari.

Someone saw him [Qadhi Yahya Bin Aktham] in a dream being questioned, and very sternly as if being reprimanded, whilst he stood very silently.

One the 'reprimand' was over he humbly said: "I had read in the Hadeeth: 'Verily Allah Ta'ala is modest with an old Muslim;' that You forgive such a person. But I see the contrary here."

Allah Ta'ala declared: "Go! Though you have nothing to be gleeful at, however We take pity on your old age and grant you forgiveness. Our Rasool [Muhammad] (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) spoke the truth. Indeed we take pity on an old person."

Shaikh Sa'di says:

"All the time my heart gives me the assurance

That to Allah's modesty my white hairs are an insurance."

6. Sprinkling Flour Over the Beard

Qadhi Yahya Bin Aktham was forgiven on account of his old age. Even more astounding is the incident of one young joker. When he was about to die he became fearful of his destiny as he lacked good deeds.

At the time of his death he made a bequest that after being given a ghusl and shrouded then white flour should be sprinkled on his beard. The heirs carried out the bequest.

Someone saw him in a dream being questioned as to the reason for this bequest. He replied: “Yaa Allah! I hardly had any good deed. I was therefore fearful over my condition. But I heard a Hadeeth that Allah is modest with an old Muslim. By chance I was not old and nor was it in my choice to be old. So I made this bequest of white flour to be sprinkled over my hairs to give the appearance of an old man.”

He was forgiven on account of this. Truly the mercy of Allah just looks for an excuse to forgive.

7. Biryani Every Day in this Way

The poor have a better appetite than the rich. They digest all their food. Their health is good and they are in joyous moods. They are seldom troubled by headaches and colds. The rich on the other hand have to routinely resort to medication.

A rich and a poor man were friends. The poor man was plump and healthy whilst the wealthy man was thin and sickly. One day the wealthy man said to his poor friend: “You are poor, yet in appearance you seem better. You are plump and healthy. What do you eat?”

The poor friend replied: “Every day I eat biryani and every month I make a new nikaah.” The wealthy man laughed in disbelief. “You are laughing?” said the poor man. “There’s nothing to laugh at. Tomorrow you are invited to meals at my place.” The wealthy man accepted, but was bewildered.

The following day the wealthy man arrived at the home of his poor friend for the meal. The poor friend started to speak with his wealthy friend and the conversation carried on for a few hours.

Then the wealthy man started to ask about the food. “It’s not yet ready”, the poor friend answered. “Wait awhile,” he said, and resumed the conversation. The wealthy man started to become hungry and restless. He demanded that the food be brought.

When the host—the poor man—saw his guest had become terribly hungry, he said: “The biryani is not yet ready, but there is some left over roti and bhaji [greens]. Should I bring that?”

“Bring whatever there is,” said the hungry visitor. “Bring it now!”

The host brought the stale roti and bhaji and put it before his guest. The rich man whose hunger had created in him a beastly appetite fell upon the food like a madman. Every morsel brought out a cry of “Subhaanallah” from the inner recesses of his heart.

When he had gobbled up all the food, the host brought the biryani. “Here is the main course.” But the guest had eaten with relish to his fill and therefore declined to have any of the biryani. “Eat,” said the host, “this is a deliciously rich meal.” The visitor replied: “What I ate was all that I could ask for. It was absolutely delightful.”

The poor friend then remarked: “The biryani I have daily is what you ate; dry roti and bhaji. After a hard day’s work and becoming hungry this simple food is more delicious to us than your biryani, because you snack all day long and are really not hungry at meal time. This is what I meant.” The rich man now understood how the poor man ate “biryani” everyday and enjoyed his meals more than he [the rich man] did.

8. Simplicity

I am narrating a wonderful story of simplicity. Close to our town there is another town. A Hakeem Saheb stayed there. He is the offspring of our seniors. Once, Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih) visited him. Quietly he approached Moulana [Gangohi] and without formalities he said: “You have many devotees here. If you say, then I will arrange for a da’wat [invitation to a meal] as I do not have food at my home today.”

Look at that! Moulana’s visit was not at all a burden on him constraining him to borrow money and prepare meals. Since he had no food at home he frankly confessed to the visitor.

And what a wonderful guest was Moulana (Rahmatullahi alaih) who replied: “Bhai! I am your guest. Since you have no food then I, too, will go without eating. Don’t ask anyone to give a da’wat.”

The day passed and everyone was unmindful of eating. Close to Maghrib, a patient came and paid Hakeem Saheb eleven rupees and departed.

Hakeem Saheb came to Moulana and said: “Hazratji! Allah Ta’ala has sent eleven rupees for your meals.” Moulana responded: “Bhai! Don’t spend and prepare extravagantly,” but Hakeem Saheb exclaimed: “Hazrat! That’s not possible. When I didn’t have anything I kept you hungry. Now, since Allah Ta’ala sent this money by virtue of your auspicious presence, I am going to arrange for a sumptuous meal.

Accordingly, pilau, etc. were prepared and everyone enjoyed a hearty meal.

9. Shaikhji's Visit

A person told an amazing story. He said that he visited a friend of his in Ilahabad. One day, he found the children of the host all merry and dressed up. They were saying joyfully: "Today Shaikhji is coming". He says: "I thought to myself, 'Perhaps some important guest was arriving.' I waited in anticipation of meeting the guest. When considerable time had elapsed with no sign of any Buzrug arriving, and eating time also passing, I asked around about this Shaikhji. Someone said: "Today there's no food here. These people have named 'no food' as 'Shaikhji'. When there is no food at their home, they amuse their children with 'Shaikhji's visit' and the children understand that no meals will be prepared for the day. The children spend the day in fun and play unperturbed about not eating."

Allahu Akbar! What patience and self-restraint! Leave alone the parents, the children were not even troubled.

10. Living and Dying for Allah

Ibn Faariz (Rahmatullahi alaih) displayed precisely at the time of death how tranquil and at ease the Ahl-e-Nisbat are.

[The Ahl-e-Nisbat are the Awliya. Nisbat means bond. They have struck up a firm and lasting bond of love and friendship with Allah Ta'ala, hence the title Ahl-e-Nisbat.]

His story goes like this: When he was dying then all eight gateways of Jannat were placed before him. He turned his face away from the entrances and read this couplet:

“If my stage of love for Thee is what I see

Then life has been a waste for me”

In other words, he implied: “I did not love You for this. I seek something else.”

As he completed his couplet the Eight Jannats vanished and an ineffable Divine manifestation appeared. With that his soul soared into the Heavens.

11. Reciting and Understanding the Qur'aan Shareef— the Lot of Muslims

Once, my younger brother was travelling by train. In the same compartment an Englishman was seated. My brother was holding a Qur'aan Shareef which was not handwritten, but printed. [Printed Qur'aan Shareefs had just come in vogue in that part of the world in those days, that is in the early 19th Century.]

The Englishman spoke: Can I look at it?

Brother: You can look at it provided that you respect it and treat it with reverence, because this is our Holy Scripture.

Englishman (taking a cloth in his hand): I will not touch it with my hands. I will hold it with this cloth.

My brother put the Qur'aan Shareef in the cloth which the Englishman had held. He opened it with the cloth and his gaze fell on الـر. The head of the ر was slightly bent due to the print being slightly shoddy and which made the ر appear to be a و. The Englishman therefore asked: “What’s this? الـو [Potato]?”

My brother took the Qur'aan and said: “You cannot read this Book without learning from us.”

This is another characteristic of the Qur'aan. Without learning from Muslims no nation can recite it properly on their own; leave alone understanding it.

12. The Creation and World of Meanings

The Grammarians of the Arabic language have stated that the pronoun هُوَ [he] is hidden in the verb ضَرَبَ [hit]. This means that the pronoun is not stated in the words, but it is implied.

One student, however, understood it to mean that the pronoun هُوَ [he] is ‘hiding’ inside ضَرَبَ

He thus started to scrape the word until the reverse side of the page became visible. Coincidentally on the other side, at that spot, هُوَ was written.

The student became elated at seeing for himself what the Ustaad had said; that هُوَ is hidden in it. “Scraping ضَرَبَ has revealed هُوَ,” he said to himself and ran to show his discovery to the Ustaad.

“Look! I scraped ضَرَبَ and هُوَ came out,” he said to the Ustaad. The Ustaad had a chuckle, and then explained to him again the purport of هُوَ being ‘hidden’ in ضَرَبَ

This student was under the misconception that meanings are words. He was in error. Meanings are not the sounds of recital or words written. The locus of meanings is the mind.

People are amazed at wireless messages. But Allah Ta’ala had created that since time immemorial, for understanding meanings from words is this same wireless transmission.

The storage centre of meanings is the mind. When words are spoken, at once the mind receives and understands.

13. Hifz—A Miracle of the Qur’aan

Friends! The text of the Qur’aan plays a major role in the protection of the Qur’aan. The reason for this is that it is the miracle of the text of the Qur’aan for it to be memorized with such ease. Allah forbid! Allah forbid! If these written copies of the Qur’aan are lost, even a child who is a Hafiz can recite and dictate it by memory, leave alone grown-ups.

In Muzaffar Nagar [a town in India] a Moulana wanted to display this miracle of the Qur’aan. During the course of his bayaan [talk/lecture] he read an Aayat and got stuck in it. He addressed the audience saying: “Would all the Huffaaz [plural of Hafiz] in this gathering—young and old—please stand up. I have a doubt in the Aayat. I wish to ascertain the exact words.”

From all sides people aplenty stood up. There were children, youth, old men and middle-aged men. Beholding this spectacle the Moulana commented: “Alhamdulillah? My Friends! I have not forgotten the Aayat. I merely wish to show that in spite of the fact that this was not a gathering planned for Huffaaz; it is an ordinary gathering, yet, look at the number of Huffaaz here!

“Now judge how many Huffaaz are there in the whole town. Then work out how many are there in the entire district. Then think about how many Huffaaz are there in the entire country. And how many must there be in the entire world!!!”

Friends! Is this not a miracle of the Qur’aan? In spite of there being a lack of enthusiasm for Deen, the Hafiz not gaining some high post in the community—in fact the rich are more interested in secular education for their children—and in spite of the kuffaar working around the clock to demonize and destroy the Qur’aan we have so many Huffaaz.

There are children who are Hafiz; men who are Hafiz and in some places women who are Hafizahs. In Panipat there are many women who are Hafizahs. In fact, some are Hafizahs of Sab'ah Qiraat [the Seven Recitations of the Qur'aan].

14. The Humility of the Ahlullah and Pomposity of Shallow Ulama

Some villains abused the Ahlullah [pious servants of Allah] and wished to discredit them. They [the villains] had faeces thrown on their [the Ahlullah's] graves. But their names and their spiritual effulgence are still shining and dazzling whilst those villains have become unknown and assigned to oblivion. No one knows their names now and there is no trace of their graves. The resting places of the Ahlullah on the other hand are up to today frequently visited.

It is furthermore observed that the Ahlullah desire obliteration, nonexistence and obscurity whilst shallow Ulama resort to all tricks in the book for self-aggrandizement and popularity. But the Ahlullah, that is the true Ulama shine out whilst the popularity of the shallow Ulama remains for a short time, only to be lost in the bowels of the earth.

Some writers never even wrote their names in their works. But their kitaabs are accepted and widely-circulated. Shallow Ulama on the other hand extravagantly display their names, but their books are assigned to archives.

An amusing incident comes to mind. One person asked another: "What is your name?" The person questioned wanted to be pompous and replied: "My name is Abu Abdillahis Samee'il Aleem Allathi yumsikus sama-a antaqa' alal ardhi illa be-ithnih." [His name was Abu Abdillah. He attached some attributes of Allah Ta'ala with words of the Qur'aan to make his name sound grandiose.]

The questioner smiled and said: "Oh, Welcome, Mr. Half of the Qur'aan."

This is the mannerism of those who are conceited. By hook or by crook they wish to project themselves into the limelight.

15. Slick and Oily

In Mathnawi [the acclaimed anthology of Moulana Rumi] there is a story written of a conceited person. He was poor, but portrayed himself to be rich. He had some animal fat in a skin. Daily he would oil his moustache with the fat and appear before people saying: “Today I ate pilau,” “Today I ate qorma.” [In other words, with his oily appearance he wished to deceive onlookers into thinking that he regularly enjoyed rich and sumptuous meals.]

One day this person was bragging in his usual fashion when his son came running and shouting: “Abba! A stray-cat took away the skin and fat with which you oil your moustache daily.”

The son let the cat out of the bag and people came to know of that person’s lies. His slick look was on account of rubbing fat to his face, not as he claimed, “eating pilau and qorma.”

In short those who are pretentious never go far. A day definitely comes when their masks of deception are ripped apart. Then, instead of honour they are disgraced in the eyes of others.

16. The Ulama-e-Haqqaani

True Ulama desire to remain anonymous and think of themselves to be worthless; adopting all ways towards this end. But Allah Ta'ala places them on the centre stage.

Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb's (Rahmatullahi alaih) external appearance and dress were such that no one would think him to be an Aalim. Neither would he don a robe and gown and nor would he wear fine and exquisite garments. His dress was of coarse and thick fabric. With such dressing he would attend huge gatherings. But in front of him all robe and gown-clothed Ulama would take a back seat. The name of Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb would flash brightly, whilst people would not even ask who were the others.

The Shahjahanpur Debate saw a majestic confrontation between Islam and the opponents of Islam. Among the partaking Ulama of Islam were those who were dressed in fine robes and gowns. Hazrat Moulana [Qaasim Saheb] was clad in his usual kurta and lungi. But when he commenced his speech the audience was so captivated that the Hindus of Shahjahanpur confessed: "The blue lungi Molvi won.

His speech was like a river in full flood. No one could respond to any of his points.

17. Moulana Qaasim Saheb's Name and Fame

It was the habit of Moulana [Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi] that he would prefer to remain anonymous in his travels. He would even forbid his associates to divulge his name. If someone had to ask him what his name was, he would reply: “Khurshid Husain”. His name from his date of birth read ‘Khurshid Husain’. [In other words, the numbers of his date of birth represented, as letters, the words ‘Khurshid Husain’. This is called the Abjad count and such a name is referred to as Taareekhi Naam which literally means ‘historical name’.] However, he was not known with this name and hence no one would realize that this was Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb.

And if someone had to enquire about his hometown, he would reply: “Ilahabad”. He would not take the name of Nanota. Some associates would say: “Hazrat! How is Ilahabad your hometown?” In other words, it was fictitious. He would reply: “Nanota is also a town populated by Allah. Thus, literally every town is Ilahabad.” In other words, this is not fictitious; it is open to two interpretations.

Regardless of such care to conceal himself he, still, would not remain hidden. Allah Ta’ala would make him shine out. The honour of the illustrious Ahlullah is so great that they are not in need of external paraphernalia of fame and glory. External paraphernalia are adopted by those who do not have true glory. They resort to external means and agencies to get name and fame.

18. Whither Allah, Thither Shah Daulah

There was a buzrug by the name of Shah Daulah. The townsfolk came running to him crying: “Hazrat! Flood water is heading for the town! The town is in danger of becoming flooded. Make du’aa to Allah Ta’ala for its direction to be diverted elsewhere.”

“Tomorrow, everyone should come here with their spades. I will solve this matter,” Shah Daulah replied.

The next day everyone came. Shah Daulah took them to the river and said: “Start digging a channel for the water to the town”.

“Hazrat! Then in just one day, instead of two, the water will flood our town!”

“The river’s direction is towards out town. This is what Allah Ta’ala wants. So, whither Allah, thither Shah Daulah.” [In other words, whatever the Will of Allah Ta’ala, Shah Daulah accepts and obeys.] “Start digging!”

In those times people were obedient to Buzrugs. They started digging a channel toward the town.

After a short while the direction of the water changed and the river started to flow elsewhere. The town was out of danger.

This is the way of the Ahlullah. Look at how they submit to the Will of Allah.

19. What Kind of Relationship Do We Have With Allah Ta'ala?

In our town the son of a very wealthy person owning many properties started to read Namaaz and even make I'tikaaf in Ramadhaan. After Namaaz he would engage in lengthy du'aa. This boy's uncle remarked: "Silly! What are you making so long du'aas for, stretching out your hands? What don't you have at home? You have land, a home, livestock. What more are you asking for?"

This person implied that the relationship with Allah is for food and the basic necessities of life. When a person has all that, then what connection is necessary with Allah? Na'oothu Billah! [May Allah Ta'ala save us from such blasphemy and kufr!]

That ignoramus brought it on his tongue, but this is what the actions of people give off. The condition of people nowadays is just this. Relationship with Allah Ta'ala is at a minimal. Relationship with Allah Ta'ala is for one's own ends. Thus, when a person has no personal interest then he shows no interest to foster his relationship with Allah Ta'ala.

20. A Despicable Attitude

If Allah Ta'ala grants someone a thousand rand then the person is happy with Allah and he considers Allah to be worthy of shukr and praise. And if one's livelihood is diminished even slightly, then—Na'oothu Billah—neither is Allah considered worthy of being grateful to and nor praiseworthy. In fact, the opposite, complaint and blasphemy are uttered.

Just recently we had an incident by us. A person passed away. His heirs were the wife, a daughter and an asabah who was a little distant relative. The family were not on good terms with this asabah.

When the Ulama worked out the shares they recorded the share of the asabah. Upon this, the family started finding fault with the Fatwa and the Mufti, saying: “How is it that such a distant relative inherits?”

I responded: “Ask that asabah who has been awarded that amount how appreciative he is of the Shariah. If you are critical of the Shariah, the one who has received his share has praises for the Shariah. O Zaalims! If the Shariah instructs a share for you from avenues where you never thought or imagined then you will sing the praises of the Shariah.”

In short, the bond with Allah is for money and food. If that is forthcoming then all praises to Allah, otherwise—Na'oothu Billah—nothing.

21. Meticulous Care for the Words of the Qur'aan

Do you know who Allah Ta'ala is? He is the beginning and end of all beauty and perfection. Since He is such a wonderful and beautiful Being we should necessarily observe what He wants. And Allah Ta'ala wants the Qur'aan to be preserved. Thus, you should devote your attention to this and with meticulous care learn its text, for the text and meanings of the Qur'aan, both are worthy of attention.

The text, however, enjoys the added merit of the protection of the meanings being depended on the protection of the words. Meanings cannot be preserved without preservation of the words.

Look! The meanings of the Qur'aan were revealed to the blessed heart of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), but there, too, through the medium of words. And Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was so careful and concerned with the words that when Wahi [Divine Revelation] would come down, he would recite with Jibraeel (Alaihis Salaam) simultaneously, in spite of his memory being powerful. He feared losing those dear words and hence he would read together with Jibraeel (Alaihis Salaam).

You can gauge from this how obsessed was Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) with the text of the Qur'aan.

He was then stopped by Allah Ta'ala from doing this. "Don't take the trouble to read concurrently. We guarantee it settling on your heart." After this reassurance Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) stopped reciting together with the Farishta [Angel].

So Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) had so much concern for the words of the Qur'aan. Therefore, we, too, should honour the words.

22. Rasoolullah's Concern for His People

Rasoolullah's (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) memory was very strong. In fact, all his faculties were firm. At the age of sixty-three his hair was just slightly white. Not more than twenty-four hairs were white in spite of him having the most concern and worry. The reason for this [concern] was that the entire nation to which he commenced his propagation of Islam was ignorant. They were in the dark as to what the Shariah was. Singlehandedly he commenced his da'wat [invitation] to the Tauheed of Islam.

Initially, apart from a few, all turned against him. Just reflect! In such a scenario what concern will overcome a person when he is alone, especially when he is compassionate, benevolent and sincerely wishes for the betterment of his people? How much concern will he have in thinking about ways to reform his people? Time and again Allah Ta'ala mentions this.

“Are you going to kill yourself with worry over their condition?”

“You have not been appointed to watch over them.”

“You will not be questioned as to why they have not accepted this Faith.

Your duty is merely to deliver the Message clearly.”

These Aayaat reveal that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was deeply grieved over the condition of his people.

23. The Catalyst of All Concern

The catalyst of all concern is concern for the Aakhirat. This can only be understood by one who has had some feeling of concern for the Aakhirat. The Hadeeth speaks of this concern of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam):

“He was perpetually in thought and concern. He had some worry troubling him.”

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) himself said:

“Wallah! If you had to know what I know, (i.e. the dreadful picture of the Aakhirat) you would laugh less, cry more and run away to the wilderness screaming.”

In spite of worry of such a magnitude he, still, did not have more than twenty white hairs; evidence of the firmness of all his faculties. And this was witnessed in many episodes in his life.

24. The Most Courageous Among the Sahaabah

The illustrious Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum) state that the most courageous among them was considered to be that man who would be at the side of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) during battle because Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) would penetrate the deepest into the enemy ranks.

25. Rukaanah the Wrestler Embracing Islam

Rukaanah was a celebrated wrestler in Arabia. He said to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam): “I will believe in your Nubuwwat [i.e. you being a Nabi] if you defeat me in wrestling.”

Though this had nothing to do with being a Nabi, nevertheless Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) wished to satisfy him in that manner. The contest was on.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) dropped him. “It was a fluke,” Rukaanah snarled.

They faced up to each other for another round. Again Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) threw him down. He consequently embraced Islam.

26. Umar with a Sword at the Door

The thrilling episode of Hazrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) embracing Islam vividly portrays the power of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

When Hazrat Umar arrived at the home where Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and his companions were secretly in meeting, the honourable companions became fearful when they saw, through the fissures of the door, Umar trying to open the door. “Yaa Rasoolullah! It’s Umar standing with sword in hand! He wants to enter! We are in trouble!”

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) calmly replied: “Open the door. What can he do? If his intention is noble then we can rejoice; and if his intention is evil then he will taste the consequences of his action.”

The door was opened. Hazrat Umar walked up to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) grabbed hold of the edge of Umar’s shawl and pulled it forcefully.

“Umar! Is it not time for you to open your eyes. Till when are you going to fight with Allah and his Rasool?”

The power of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) can be gauged from this incident. Rasoolullah was unperturbed by a man whose fear was instilled in so many and who were so hesitant in opening the door for him. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) threatened him like an average person is threatened.

27. Our Excellences—Our Creation?

Everyone acknowledges that the brain, the hands and feet which we utilize for all our work are the tools granted to us by Allah Ta'ala. Even the intellect, willpower and stamina are conferred by Him. Now point out how the actions and achievements produced by these limbs, organs and faculties are our own virtues?

It is astonishing that we can still venture to claim that it is we who are protectors of the Qur'aan! When our reading and memorizing are not in our absolute control then how do we become the protectors?

As a matter of fact, it is He [Allah Ta'ala] Who is the Protector of the Qur'aan. He has utilized us for this task and granted us the means.

It is all very obvious that He is doing the protection; in fact, even our daily recital and Tilaawat are from Him. If He doesn't confer the taufeeq then we will be utterly helpless in uttering a single word.

An incident transpired in Kanpur where a person yawned. He couldn't close his mouth thereafter. His mouth remained wide open – lockjaw. He suffered tremendously. Neither could he eat, nor speak. After several days of sheer agony he was only then able to close his mouth.

28. The Most Beloved Unto a Muslim

Close to where we reside there was a buzrug, Moulana Muzaffar Husain Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih). Among our Akaabir (Pious and Learned Seniors) he was unanimously acclaimed for his Taqwa. Once, he went to the town of Garhipukhta. There, an aristocrat posed the question: “It is stated in the Hadeeth:

‘None of you are Believers until Allah and His Rasool are more Beloved to him than his own self, his wealth, his children, and everything.’

“I find myself to have more love for my father,” the aristocrat sighed. Moulana responded appropriately for the occasion. He then desired to remove the aristocrat’s concern, practically, for further satisfaction.

This practical response was given by turning to talk on Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) in the course of discussion.

Talk on Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is enjoyable to every Muslim. Everyone listened with interest. The aristocrat, too, enjoyed himself listening. When Moulana saw the aristocrat enthralled at the talk of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) he abruptly stopped and said: “Okay Khan Saheb! Let’s stop this talk and start speaking about the excellences and achievements of your honourable father! He, too, was a very good man.”

The aristocrat spoke: “Hazrat! Taubah, taubah! How can you equate talk on my father with talk on Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)? No, no! Carry on speaking about Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). My father’s excellences

cannot be compared at all to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) for you to digress and start speaking about that. That is very heavy upon my heart.”

Smiling, Moulana said: “Why, Khan Saheb? You said that you find yourself having more love for your father. Why is mention of speaking of your father in the course of speaking on Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) heavy on your heart?”

Khan Saheb caught up that Moulana was responding to his concern. “Moulana, Jazaakallah! My fear has been laid to rest. Alhamdulillah, I have such love for Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) which my love for my father cannot compare with,” the Khan Saheb said with satisfaction.

So, my friends! When there is a conflict then the truth is borne out that a Muslim has love for Allah and His Rasool (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) more than everything.

29. Conversing With One's Beloved

Reciting the Qur'aan is as if one is conversing with Allah Ta'ala. It is thus, astonishing that you being a lover of Allah Ta'ala, yet you do not want to converse with him! Love is a thing that drives a lover to seek all sorts of excuses for the opportunity to converse with the beloved.

Hazrat Sayyidina Moosa (Ala Nabiyyina Wa'alaihis Salaatu Wat-Tasleem) was questioned:

“O Moosa! What is in your right hand?”

In response to this [question by Allah Ta'ala] it was sufficient to say: “My staff,” but no, in view of his love he seized the opportunity to converse with his Beloved. He responded in detail:

“It is my staff. I rest on it and shake leaves with it for my goats.”

How lengthy! He added “It” and included the personal pronoun “my”. Then he spoke of two benefits of the staff. Finally he said:

“And I have other uses for it as well.”

This was augmented for scope of further conversation; that perhaps Allah Ta'ala enquires: "Say what are those uses?" That would have given him the opportunity to speak more, or he could have sought permission to explain the other uses. In short, his response left scope for further conversation. This subtlety just came to my mind a short while ago.

But that as it may, lovers experience incredible enjoyment in conversing with the beloved; and Muslims have been presented with this blessing all the time just sitting in their homes! Whenever they wish, they can converse with Allah Ta'ala; that is they can engage in Tilaawat of the Qur'aan.

30. Infatuation for the Qur'aan

It staggers the imagination that Muslims do not find enjoyment in listening to the Name of Allah. Is there any other kitaab which has the Name of Allah more than the Qur'aan? Virtually in every Aayat the Name of Allah is repeated. Coupled with that, praises and glorification of Allah are extensively mentioned on a sublime level. Although there are other forms of Zikrullah; however, no form of Zikr surpasses Salaat and Tilaawat of the Qur'aan. This is very clearly evidenced by the Hadeeth.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was so infatuated with the words of the Qur'aan that besides himself engaging in Tilaawat he once even told Hazrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (Radhiyallahu anhu) to recite to him. Hazrat Abdullah humbly said: "Must I read to you, Yaa Rasoolullah, whereas the Qur'aan comes down to you?" "Yes, I wish to hear it from someone else," Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) replied.

Now why did Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) request this from the Sahaabi, whereas he [Nabi Sallallahu alaihi wasallam] knew the entire Qur'aan by heart? The meanings were also present in his mind. It was simply for this reason that he was infatuated with the words of the Qur'aan. And listening from another produces more enjoyment in view of the peace one finds in it.

31. It is Sufficient for Allah to Know That We Want Him

In this Path [the Path of Divine Love; the Path of Tasawwuf] the fundamental objective is to strive and to seek. If, ostensibly, success follows thereafter, then one's purpose has been achieved; and if ostensibly one is unsuccessful, then it is the desire of Allah the Almighty.

Now, it is astonishing for you to give preference to your desire over the desire of the Beloved. In other words, you should get down to searching [the Pleasure of Allah] with resignation to the outcome. You should be satisfied with every result, be the result in accordance with your aspiration or against it.

The bottom line is that the major desire here is for Allah Ta'ala to see us occupied in searching for Him; and this goal can be achieved all the time.

Moulana Ghulaam Rasool Saheb Kanpuri went to his murshid [spiritual guide] with the view of bai't [i.e. to become initiated in the spiritual path by pledging allegiance to the Shaikh]. The Shaikh said: "First make istikhaarah and then come."

He went from there to the Masjid and after sitting there awhile he returned to the Shaikh.

"Did you make istikhaarah?"

"Yes, I made."

“That was quick! How did you make istikhaarah?”

“I asked myself: ‘Why do you want to become bai’t’. My nafs [self] replied: ‘I will get Allah Ta’ala.’

‘After bai’t you lose control over your life and wealth. You will have to incumbently do as the Shaikh tells you to do.’

‘I don’t care, as long as I get Allah Ta’ala.’

‘What if you don’t get Allah?’

‘So what if I don’t get Him? At least Allah Ta’ala will know that I wanted Him. That’s sufficient for me.’”

Having listened to the narrative of his conversation with his nafs, the Shaikh responded: “Your istikhaarah takes the prize. Come and become bai’t. Insha Allah, you will not fail.”

32. The Ahlullah—Crowned with Honour

No one receives more worldly honour than the Ahlullah. Their honour during their lives requires no explanation. Even after their demise their honour remains. Consequently, a British tourist wrote in his travel diary: “I saw something really strange in Hindustan. In Ajmer there is a dead man in his grave. He rules the entire Hindustan. From all over people come and stand in front of him with respect and honour. They bow their heads to him. Those who cannot present themselves at his grave, their hearts, too, are filled with his reverence.”

But this does not give a license for the permissibility of bowing and acts of bid'aat. These acts are haraam. I repeatedly say that to kiss the graves and bow before them are absolutely haraam. Nonetheless, the origin of that is this self-same honour and veneration brimming in hearts of the world [for the Ahlullah], although the manifestation is in a bad way.

Years pass without anyone going to the graves of the kings.

33. Tombs of Stone—Pet Projects of Those Who Lack Deen

Veneration for the Ahlullah is not confined to building mausolea over their graves. They remain honourable and venerable in graves of sand just as they are in tombs of stone. In fact, the Noor [celestial and holy light—cascades of Divine grace] radiating from graves of sand is more, in view of being in accord with the Sunnah.

The awe beaming from Hazrat Shaikh Bakhtiyar's grave of sand makes the tombs of the kings look worthless. If someone has eyes [i.e. spiritual eyes] he will know that tombs of stone are devoid of the Anwaar [Plural of Noor] adorning graves of sand.

And if someone's eyes are closed [i.e. he lacks spiritual vision] then let him understand on the basis of evidence; that Anwaar are the features of the Sunnah

Furthermore, these mausolea are entirely the buildings of the high society wealthy, the governors and kings. They are not the projects of Buzrugs. And it is evident that the projects of governors and rulers are devoid of Anwaar.

The Ahlullah are not even fussy about their material bodies; then from where did they pick up the pet projects of building and adorning tombs of stone?

Undoubtedly this is not the work of the Buzrugs. In fact, these are the pet projects of the rulers and governors. They conceive such ideas.

Rulers and high society wealthy who lack knowledge of the Deen contrive pet activities of fisq and fujoor [sin and shamelessness], whilst those who have some bond with the Deen and love for the people of Deen, they did not come up with pet projects of building tombs bid'at [innovated acts].

One wealthy person brought a very expensive, attractive, shiny leather garment for Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih). Moulana gave it to one Nawab and said: “Nawab Saheb! You wear this. This will look nice with your clothes as your garments are expensive as this is. Where am I going to look nice with this over my thick and coarse clothes? Then, who is going to look after it from moths and insects? I don't have all that time. My keeping it will be futile and harmful.”

So, when the Ahlullah are not favourably disposed to these problems related to their physical bodies they will definitely dislike these nonsensicalities related to graves.